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New Mill Creek trail enhances visitor safety

Walla Walla, Wash., -- The road to Mill Creek Project's Bennington Lake just got safer for pedestrians and cyclists. A newly constructed 1.1-mile trail running along Reservoir Road offers a motor vehicle-free path for visitors to the lake just east of this community.

"The road is narrow, steep and full of blind turns. It can be hazardous to people on foot or bicycling to the lake," said Steve Thompson, natural resource specialist at Mill Creek.

When planning the new trail, project officials wanted more than just a path right next to the road. The trail redesign was intended to meet the needs of a more diverse public and accomplished by a working team made up of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers members from operations, engineering, construction, planning and contracting divisions at Walla Walla District headquarters, along with the staff at the dam.

"We wanted the trail to have an easier slope than the road," Thompson explained. "We reduced the grade of slope so it would meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards, making it safe for strollers, people with disabilities and young kids on bikes and the elderly."

The blacktop-paved trail begins near the Mill Creek Project office and end at the final curve of Reservoir Road leading to the Bennington Lake parking area. A few final touches remain before the trail can be considered done.

"The trail is open for visitors right now, but we'll have to wait for warmer temperatures to paint the bicycle lane on it and rehabilitate the disturbed vegetation," said Thompson.

For more information about Mill Creek Project and its trail system, call (509) 527-7160.

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